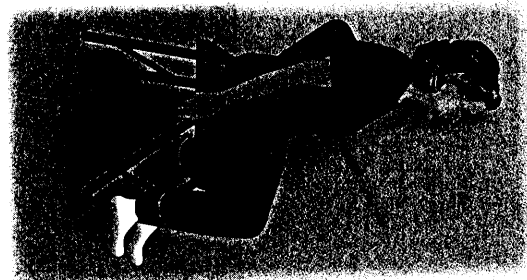
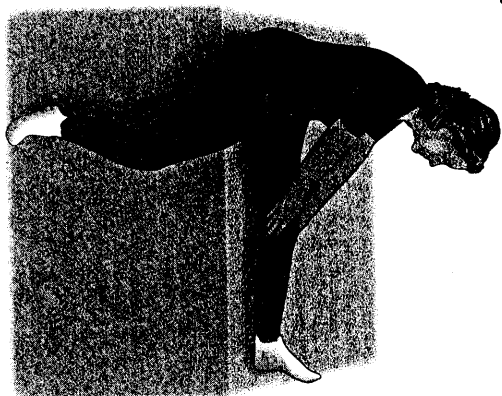


▲ **Supine leg extensions.** Lie on your back on a carpeted floor, arms at your sides, legs straight in front of you. Bend your left leg, placing that foot on the floor. Keeping the right foot cocked upward and flexed, raise the right leg to about 45 degrees. Hold that position for 5 seconds, then slowly lower leg to the floor. Keep the knee of the extended leg in a straight and locked position throughout the exercise, and concentrate on contracting the muscle just above the kneecap. Start with 8-12 repetitions. Switch legs and repeat. Do two sets with each leg. Patients who have been very inactive should do this without weights.



▲ **Seated leg extensions.** Sit on a straight-backed chair, feet flat on the floor. Place a rolled-up towel under the hamstrings, behind the knees, to keep the chair edge from digging into the back of your leg and to provide traction. Flex the right foot and raise your lower leg until it is parallel with the floor. Hold for 5 seconds and slowly lower down. Repeat 8-12 times. Relax, and repeat with the left leg. Start with two sets, and work up to three sets of 12 repetitions. Be sure your feet are cocked up and pointed slightly outward—not pigeon-toed—to avoid unnecessary strain on the knee joint.



▲ **Hip flexor stretches.** Tight hips can contribute to knee pain so hip stretches are an important part of knee strengthening. Lie flat on your back on a carpeted floor with both knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Bring your right knee to your chest, wrapping your hands around your lower leg (above the ankle). Slide your left leg out to a straight position, trying to touch the floor with the back of your knee. Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly release both legs back to the starting position. You should feel the stretch on the inner thigh of the extended leg. Repeat 5 times on each leg, working up to 12 repetitions.



▲ **Hamstrings.** Sit on the edge of a bed with your left foot stretched out on the bed and your right foot on the floor. Flex your left foot and point your toes up. Place your hands on your left knee and bend forward from the hips, keeping your foot cocked up (don't let the leg roll inward or outward). Attempt to grasp your foot with your hands and ease your forehead towards your shin.

EMILY BRANNAN, ILLUSTRATIONS

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Do these daily
for 90 days 6-23 → 9-23-05